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# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



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Contact:		Petersburg Area Office
Joe Stratman		P.O. Box 667
Adam Messmer		Petersburg, Alaska 99833
Phone: (907) 772-5238	(907) 465-4853	Date: September 14, 2012
Fax: (907) 772-9336	(907) 465-4944	Time: 4:00 p.m.

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#### **SOUTHEAST ALASKA PERSONAL USE RED AND BLUE KING CRAB FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Petersburg...The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) announced the following updated information regarding the 2012/2013 Southeast Alaska personal use red king crab fishery outside of Section 11-A:

- **Port Frederick, Peril Strait, and Seymour Canal will remain closed.**
- **Lynn Sisters and Excursion Inlet will close to personal use red and blue king crab fishing at 11:59 p.m. on September 30, 2012.**
- **Beginning at 12:01 a.m. October 1, 2012, all areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing, outside of Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C, will have a daily bag and possession limit of one king crab per day as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 lbs. [5 AAC 77.664(a)(1)].**
- **Beginning at 12:01 a.m. October 1, 2012, all areas open to personal use red and blue king crab fishing in Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C will have a daily bag and possession limit of one king crab per day as prescribed in regulation when the regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is below 200,000 lbs. [5 AAC 77.664(b)].**

#### 2012 Survey and Fishery Information

All red and blue king crab fisheries are closed in Southeast Alaska by regulation from April 1 through June 30 annually. From July 1 through March 31, open fishing periods for the personal use fisheries may be established by emergency order. The department conducts annual red king crab surveys in nine areas throughout Southeast Alaska. Those areas include: the Juneau Area in Section 11-A, Lynn Sisters, Excursion Inlet, Port Frederick, Holkham Bay, Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, Seymour Canal, and Peril Strait. The surveys generally begin approximately in mid-June and conclude in early August and data from the most recent surveys are used to manage commercial and personal use red king crab fisheries. Because the department has detailed information for each of the surveyed areas it is possible to manage those areas as distinct fishery units. The remaining waters of Southeast Alaska outside the areas surveyed are referred to as "non-surveyed" areas. In general, management decisions in the non-surveyed areas are made based on trends observed in the surveyed areas.

Because the 2012 red king crab stock assessment survey was still underway on July 1, 2012, decisions regarding the July 1, 2012 opening of the personal use red and blue king crab fisheries outside of Section 11-A were based on 2011 red king crab stock assessment survey results. Currently all surveyed areas

outside of the waters of Seymour Canal, Peril Strait, Port Frederick, and Section 11-A, and all non-surveyed areas are open to personal use fishing. All areas open to personal use red king crab fishing, outside of Sections 11-A, 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C currently have a daily bag and possession limit of six king crabs in combination. Sections 12-B, 15-B, and 15-C currently have a daily bag and possession limit of three king crabs in combination. Now that the 2012 survey and accompanying data analysis are complete, new information is available to manage the fisheries.

Based on 2012 survey results:

- Regionwide harvestable biomass of mature red and blue king crab is well below 200,000 lbs.;
- Regionally, the biomass of mature male red king crab has been declining since 2001 and is currently at its lowest level in twenty-two years;
- Stock health in Seymour Canal remains poor;
- Stock health in Peril Strait, Port Frederick, Lynn Sisters, and Excursion Inlet has declined to poor;
- Stocks in Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, and non-surveyed areas are capable of supporting a low level of personal use harvest.

Because stock health in surveyed areas has declined to below average at best, stocks in non-surveyed areas are likely exhibiting the same trends in stock health. Because of stock health concerns for red king crab in Pybus Bay, Gambier Bay, and the non-surveyed areas the bag and possession limits will be reduced substantially to allow a personal use harvest opportunity, but at a low level of intensity. Refer to Figure 1 for a map showing open and closed waters for personal use red and blue king crab fishing effective October 1, 2012.

#### Closed Area Descriptions

- Port Frederick: Port Frederick (all waters of Port Frederick south and west of a line between the light at Cannery Point to the northernmost tip of Halibut Island and from there to a point at 58°09.60' N. latitude, 135°30.00' W. longitude).
- Seymour Canal: Section 11-D, Seymour Canal (waters of Seymour Canal north of 57°37.00' N. latitude).
- Excursion Inlet: Excursion Inlet waters north of a line from Excursion Point at 58°22.50' N. latitude, 135°29.00' W. longitude, due east to a point at 58°22.50' N. latitude, 135°25.00' W. longitude.
- Peril Strait: Section 13-C, Peril Strait (all waters of Peril Strait including Hoonah Sound, Ushk Bay, Rodman Bay, Saook Bay, Hanus Bay, Sitkoh Bay, and contiguous waters west of a line from Point Hayes to Point Thatcher, and north of a line from Pogibshi Point due west to the Chichagof shoreline).
- Lynn Sisters: St. James Bay west of a line between Point Whidbey and a point at 58°33.00' N. latitude, 135°09.60' W. longitude.

#### Juneau Area: Section 11-A

Personal use red and blue king crab fishing did not open in Section 11-A (Juneau area) for the 2012/2013 season. Details of the red and blue king crab personal use fishery closure within Section 11-A were previously released in a separate news release dated July 9, 2012. For more information on the status of the red and blue king crab personal use fishery within Section 11-A, please contact Dave Harris at 465-4250.

#### Other information

Fishermen are reminded only male red king crab seven inches or greater in width of shell may be retained. For blue king crab, only males six and one-half inches or greater in width of shell may be

retained. Male king crab less than the minimum legal size and female king crab must be immediately returned to the water unharmed.

**No more than 4 pots or 10 ring nets per vessel may be used in the personal use king crab fishery [5 AAC 77.664(f)].** A pot used to take king crab must have at least two escape rings on opposing vertical or sloping sides of the pot that are not less than six and one-quarter inches inside diameter. Each fisherman shall plainly and legibly inscribe the fisherman's first initial, last name, and home address on a keg or buoy attached to a pot. A keg or buoy attached to the pot must also be inscribed with the vessel name or the division of motor vehicles registration number (AK number) of the vessel used to operate the pot [5 ACC 77.010 and 5 AAC 77.664(f)].

Please refer to 5 AAC 77.664 in the 2012-2013 Subsistence and Personal Use Statewide Fisheries Regulations booklet for additional regulations regarding personal use red and blue king crab fishing, or view the regulations online at:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/Subsistence-PU-2012-2013.pdf>.

The Emergency Order corresponding with this announcement is EO 1C1812.

News releases web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>.

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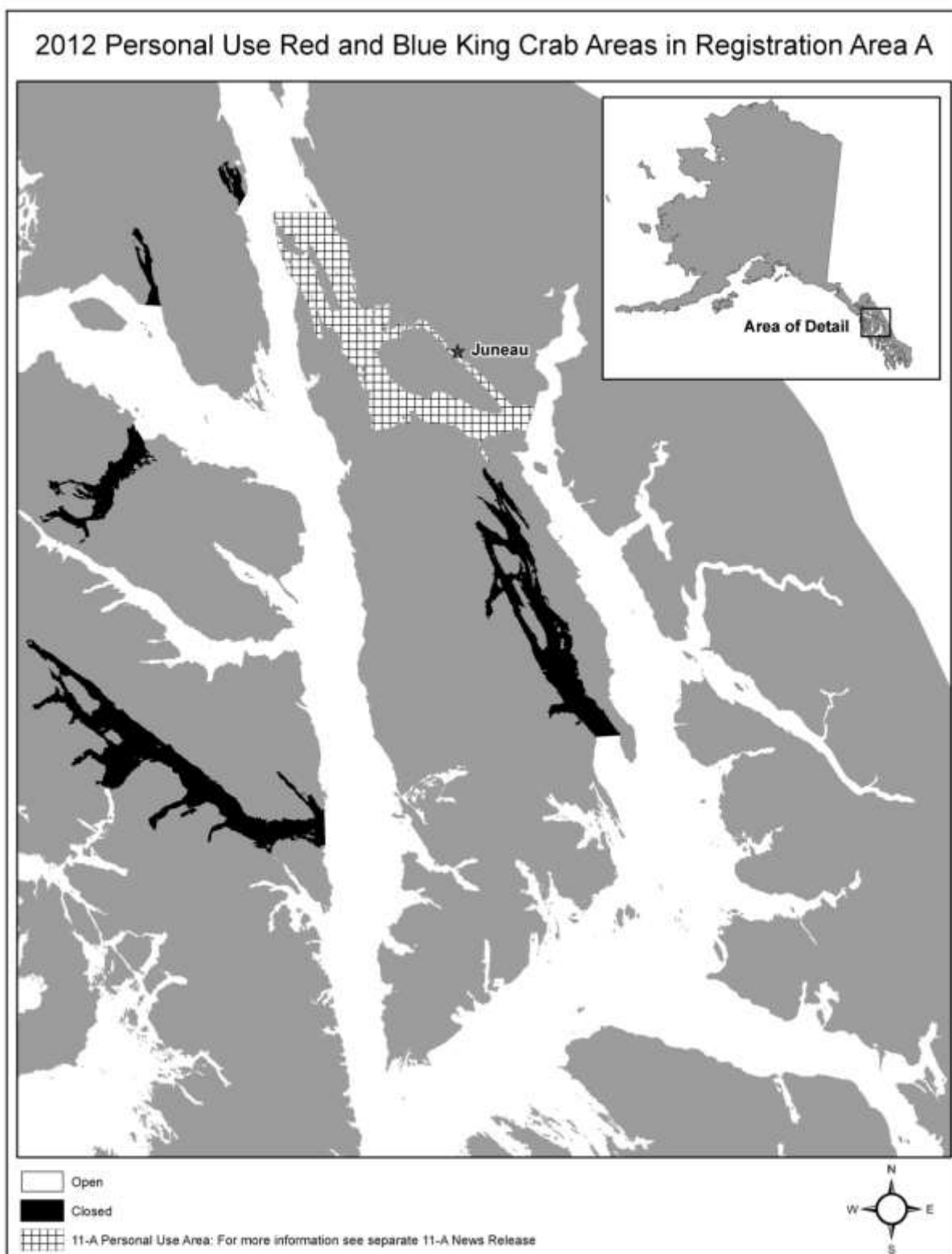


Figure 1. This map only reflects changes to the 2012/2013 red and blue king crab personal use fishery **which go into effect October 1, 2012**, and is for reference purposes only. Please refer to text in this news release for legal descriptions of management area boundaries and other details.